

Brown Bag Series #5

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Venue: Collaboration Room 3, Building 18, Komaba Campus, UTokyo

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Unsettling: Displacement during Civil Wars

What explains when and where armed groups displace civilians during civil wars? I argue that armed groups target groups of civilians in order to displace them when and where: (1) they can identify a shared trait that signals which civilians are disloyal to their cause, and (2) they undertake the conquest of a territory. However, it is difficult for armed groups to detect civilian's loyalties during civil wars. In some cases, they are signaled by elections, or by membership in political organizations. Elections in particular both facilitate and incentivize displacement by (1) revealing population preferences: and (2) giving elites a stake in local political power, motivating them to ally with outside armed groups to protect it. This has important policy implications: elections in unstable contexts can also provide armed groups the means to engage in political cleansing. The book tests the implications with novel evidence from Colombia, mixing qualitative and quantitative methods.

